



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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KENTUCKY CHILDREN BENEFITTED FROM MORE SUMMER MEALS IN 2018

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky Summer Food Service (SFSP) sponsors, along with many partners across the state, are celebrating the increase in the number of summer meals served to children across Kentucky in 2018.

The Summer Food Service Program is a USDA Child Nutrition Program under the Kentucky Department of Education that helps ensure children in low-income households continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Children who rely on school meals often struggle to get enough to eat when school is out, especially during the summer break.

Local organizations – including school districts, community action agencies, camps and other nonprofit programs – apply to participate as a sponsor in the SFSP to provide free nutritious meals to children in their community. Meal costs are reimbursed by the USDA at established rates. More than 670 stops on mobile routes across Kentucky provided meals, with many sponsors also providing activities to engage children and provide enrichment.

In 2018, almost 3 million SFSP meals were served from May through August in Kentucky, an increase of nearly 166,000 meals compared to the summer of 2017. July and August saw high increases in the number of meals served, signifying that sponsors are recognizing that the need for meals spans the entire summer and are working to meet that need. In July, the growth in meals compared to 2017 was 18% and in August, 21.5%.

While these increases are to be celebrated, the SFSP staff and sponsors will continue identifying potential sponsors and sites to close the gap between children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals and the number of children that receive summer meals through the SFSP. In October 2017, there were 7.3 million free and reduced-price lunches served in Kentucky in the National School Lunch Program. In June 2018, 881,316 summer lunches were served in the SFSP. This suggests that approximately 12% of the number of free or reduced-price school meal recipients were receiving a free summer lunch.

In order to participate as a Summer Food Service Program sponsor, organizations must have an approved 2019 SFSP application. For more information about SFSP, contact the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of School and Community Nutrition by phone at (502) 564-5625 or email Cathy Gallagher at Cathy.Gallagher@education.ky.gov.

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